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ABSTRACT

Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada, a women's film making unit established to make films by, for, and about women, has created a group of five films that effectively develop the argument that women can and must join the effort to bring peace to a nuclear world. The first of these peace films, "If You Love This Planet," consists of words and images from a speech by Dr. Helen Caldicott, author and spokesperson for Physicians for Social Responsibility, which questions the industrial nations' increasing stocks of nuclear arms. "Speaking Our Peace" follows Muriel Duckworth, a Canadian peace activist, through a series of conversations with women in Canada and the Soviet Union which introduce the breadth of women's involvement in peace efforts. Three spin-off films resulted from "Speaking Our Peace": "A Writer in the Nuclear Age: A Conversation with Margaret Laurence"; "Nuclear Addiction: Dr. Rosalie Bertell on the Cost of Deterrence"; and "A Love Affair with Politics: A Portrait of Marion Dewar." All three spin-off films are relatively short (10-27 minutes) and would lend themselves to use in classes or club meetings, and, like the other films, develop the theme that despair is not an appropriate response to a nuclear world, action is, and "ordinary" people can make a difference. (A list of films by Studio D and 17 references are appended.) (MM)

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The National Film Board's Studio D: Feminists Making Films for Peace

A Paper

by

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to

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports an analysis of the peace films made by Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada, a women's film making unit. This unique group, established to make films by, for and about women, makes films that they intend to accomplish the goal of changing the status of women in society. In recent years, Studio D filmmakers have created a group of five films that effectively develop the argument that women can and must join the effort to bring peace to a nuclear world: _If You Love This Planet_ (1982); _Speaking Our Peace_ (1985); _A Writer in the Nuclear Age_ (1985); _Nuclear Addiction_ (1986); _A Love Affair With Politics_ (1987).

The National Film Board's Studio D:
Feminists Making Films for Peace

In 1938, reacting to the predominance of U.S. made films with U.S. content in Canadian theatres, the Parliament of Canada commissioned a study to "survey and make specific recommendations for the development of Canadian government film production." There followed the National Film Act of May 2, 1939 creating a National Film Board (hereafter, NFB) and the appointment of John Grierson as its first commissioner. Grierson, already internationally respected as a film critic and historian and one of the world's first producers of documentary films in England, was described as a dynamic and forceful man. His development of this unique national institution began with one assistant, two secretaries and a supervisor of production. By 1945 when he left the Board, it had a staff of 787 in twelve production units that had created 500 films being shown throughout Canada and in the U.S. as well (Evans, 1977).

The NFB had not been created because of the war consuming Europe and threatening North America as well, but that war permeated the intellectual and social environment of Canada, thus inevitably influencing how the new institution would develop. Grierson ennunciated two goals for the Board: to make films to cover the historical aspects of the war and to "secure the future" by making films about the "everyday things of life, the values, the ideals which make life worth living." Grierson wanted NFB films to show Canadians (and others) that there was "something worth fighting for, worth going back to." (Nash, 1982).

In spite of this strong identification with the war effort and the necessity for government "sanction" of NFB films, Grierson saw clearly that

the film makers must remain free from government restraints. He knew that creativity could be stifled by government regulations. Moreover, he was anxious that the NFB perform a dual role. Not only should it be a means for the government to maintain morale in a nation at war, but he wanted it to be a mode of information flow in the opposite direction as well. He hoped to be able to "translate the needs of the Canadian public into Government policy."

At the close of the war there was considerable sentiment to disband the NFB, but that never occurred. The National Film Board of Canada still operates under a legal mandate to "produce and distribute, and to promote the production and distribution of films in the public interest." Specifically, it must "interpret Canada to Canadians" and to other nations, "represent and advise the government in matters pertaining to film, conduct film research and disseminate its findings." NFB films are available without charge to Canadians through libraries, or through the distribution division of the Board itself. In its early years, NFB film makers traveled to local churches, schools, and libraries to discuss their work with those who came to see the films, creating a strong synergy between the film makers and those who "consumed" the work through a direct interaction between artist and audience. While this practice has largely disappeared in most Board studios, a similar kind of direct interaction between filmmakers and women audiences has been maintained at Studio D.

Even in the special environment of the NFB, many influences of the larger society remained unchallenged. Like many (if not most) artistic environments, filmmaking has been male dominated. Until very recently, virtually all directors and producers have been men; and women, when present

in the filmmaking mileu, have played supportive roles. Women in the NFB were similarly "influential," always present, but in small numbers and rarely in important roles. The ferment of the '60s affected people in the NFB as it did the rest of North America, and the few women there began to recognize their own worth and agitate for change. One of these was Kathleen Shannon, who joined the Board as a sound editor in 1956. Working as picture and sound editor, she contributed to more than 200 films, before being permitted to direct or produce. In the early 1970s she began creating, "Working Mothers," a series of short films introducing women whose lives involved the difficult juxtaposition of paid work outside the home and motherhood. The women of Canada responded to this series with unprecedented enthusiasm, and it remains popular with NFB film users in 1986. The series has, comments Shannon, "remained unfortunately current" (1986).

Due in part to this strong audience reaction to "Working Mothers," in part to the perhaps even stronger personal influence of a few women at the Board, including Shannon, and in part to the excitement of women everywhere about International Women's Year, the NFB in 1974 created a new studio, Studio D, mandating it to meet the "particular needs of women film makers and audiences." The creation and charge of Studio D acknowledged both a need to improve the status of women within the Board (a strong need as the Board's own Equal Opportunity Report documented a few years later) and the absence of films among the NFB catalog that suitably addressed the women's audience (Brassard, et. al. 1978).

The creation of Studio D, however, typified mainstream responses to feminist agitation in the 1970s. A (very) few women who currently worked at the Film Board were reassigned to establish the new unit. No new budget or

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new positions accompanied its creation. Three people with small, dark offices in the basement of the National Film Board in Montreal began the work of Studio D. Over the next decade, creative budgeting and careful planning attracted others excited by the possibilities. The budget slowly increased and the work matured. What began with so small a nucleus became a major force.

During its first six years, Studio D work included many films focusing on women's work. In an Archival Film Package released in 1977, eight World War II films were re-released to illustrate the popularized image of women. These included Women at War (1942), Wings on Her Shoulder (1945), Proudly She Marches (1945), Careers and Cradles (1947), Needles and Pins (1957), Service in the Sky (1957), Is It a Woman's World (1957) and Women at Work (1958). In addition studio members created The Lady from Grey County (1977), a portrait of the first woman elected to the Canadian Parliament that highlights her 18 years in the House of Commons, 1921-1939; Some American Feminists (1977), a view of the 20th century's second Women's Right Movement in which film footage from the 60s is mixed with comments by Ti-grace Atkinson, Rita Mae Brown, Margo Jefferson, Lila Karp and Kate Millett; Great Grand Mother (1975), an evocation of the often ignored history of the women who settled the Canadian Prairies; Prairie Album (1980), a short (12 minute) animated film that recalls life of a Prairie family during the Depression of the 1930s; and The Right Candidate for Rosedale (1979), reporting the 1978 bid by Ann Cools to become the Liberal Party nominee in the district of Rosedale, Ontario that was one of the most controversial nomination battles in Canadian political history. A later series of films presents a group of women in nontraditional roles and occupations: Laila

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(1980); Louise Drouin, Veterinarian (1981); I Want to be an Engineer (1983); Attention: Women at Work (1983); The Impossible Takes a Little Longer (1986); Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief (1986).

Of long range signficance for Studio D has been the evolution in its work. Originally established with the charge to make films for, about and by women, its early work told stories of women's lives or about women's issues that did little to disturb most nonfeminist viewers. And though the Studio still makes such films, the group has matured into a unit willing to deal with more controverial issues. Studio D, now a predominantly female group of 13 staff filmmakers and many freelancers, now implements a feminist philosophy and has, with technical and other support from the rest of the NFB, created many award winning films and many films with few compromises about the shackles a society places on its female members.

Studio D now overtly identifies its feminist goals. In an April 1985 news release intended to celebrate the "Second Decade," Studio D restates its original multi-part mandate of: providing "training for women with emphasis on the film crafts from which women have been traditionally excluded"; increasing the employment of professional women filmmakers; addressing the "specific information needs of women audiences"; bringing "women's perspectives to all social issues through the medium of film"; and maintaining "an environment where women can explore a female esthetic." (NFB, 1985). A tri-color publicity brochure prepared about the same time makes the philsophy more explicit: "We acknowledge feminism as an important political force which needs continued support and exposure," and the Studio pledges to contribute a feminist viewpoint, whether its films are made by men or by women. The brochure continues, "we are determined to continue

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making films and engage in other activities directly connected to the feminist movement . . . we believe that nothing less than full equality between men and women can liberate humanity as a whole," and asserts the essential role of film as a part of "that long process of changing attitudes." (NFB , n.d.)

True to these goals, much recent work by Studio D directly challenges the status quo. Abortion: Stories from North and South (1984) presents a frightening look at how women achieve and suffer from back alley abortions in countries where legal abortions are not available. Behind the Veil NUNS (1985) looks critically at how the church systematically eliminated women from positions of influence they held in earlier years. D.E.S. An Uncertain Legacy (1986) unfolds a shocking story of medical misuse of an untested "miracle" drug. No Longer Silent (1986) examines how common and horrifying brideburning remains in "modern" India.

The best known Studio D films are among its least compromising. Among the films of which many people in the U.S. are aware is Terri Nash's If You Love This Planet, which I identify as the first of Studio D's peace films. This film received wide U.S. publicity when our Department of State labelled it as propaganda and attempted to prohibit U.S. distribution of the film. Released almost simultaneously with If You Love This Planet was Studio D's most commercially successful and perhaps most contoversial film, Bonnie Klein's Not A Love Story, a searing examination of the pornography business and its impact on women.

In 1985, Studio D released Speaking Our Peace, co-directed by Nash and Klein, the foundation of a series including three shorter pieces focusing on three different women working in the peace movement: A Writer in the

Nuclear Age (1985); Nuclear Addiction (1986); and A Love Affair with Politics (1987). These films, together with If You Love This Planet, constitute what I describe as the Studio D peace films and are the focus of this paper.

Studio D's first such film, the 1982 Academy Award winner for best documentary short subject, **If You Love This Planet**, may also be destined to be its most widely known film. The Academy Award accounts for only part of **If You Love This Planet**'s notoriety, however. It became more familiar, at least in the U.S., because it was one of three films created by Canada's National Film Board that were branded by the U. S. State Department as "political propaganda."

This short (29 min) piece consists of words and images from a speech by Dr. Helen Caldicott, author of **Nuclear Madness** and spokesperson for Physicians for Social Responsibility, intercut with archival photos (stills, newsreels, and U.S. government films, one of them a War Information Office movie featuring Ronald Reagan as an eager WW II pilot). Dr. Caldicott's harsh words, articulated by an insistent, almost strident voice, and her angular, stern and authoritative visage call the viewer to question international, but especially Western industrial nations', constantly increasing stocks of nuclear arms. Caldicott raises alarm about the specter of nuclear war, whether "accidental" or "intentional." Nuclear disarmament must begin NOW is Caldicott's intensely argued thesis.

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In one sense, this film originated when Terri Nash, its director, heard Caldicott speak at McGill in 1981. After listening to Caldicott's speech, Nash says, "I knew that I had to film it." A free-lance filmmaker at Studio D, Nash knew that her proposal must be inexpensive or it would never be acceptable. Studio D is perennially cash starved and Nash, virtually unknown as a filmmaker, would not be supported in an expensive venture. Nash proposed a budget of $68,000 to film a speech, extract approximately 20 minutes of its central message, and interweave the words and images of Caldicott with archival material. Nash tells of the serendipity that occurred as she stayed for a week after a conference in Washington D.C. to see what archival materials could be found for such a film. During that very week previously classified materials were released, including some newsreel material from Universal Studios and the government information film, **Jap Zero**, that included the shots of Reagan. It was, to Nash, a confirmation that this film HAD to be. (Nash, 1986).

In another sense, **If You Love This Planet** originated much earlier because it fits completely within the tradition of the National Film Board, articulated by its founding Commissioner Grierson. Already a renowned documentary filmmaker in England when enticed to Canada to develop the NFB, Grierson saw film as a means to educate, to inspire, to motivate. He was quoted as believing the filmmaker, like rabbis, prophets, and priests, had the right (perhaps even the duty) to "condition the imagination of mankind." In the film medium the influence could flow both ways. Not only could it serve as a tool by which government educated and inspired the people, but it could be a tool to communicate the concerns and needs of citizens to those who governed. This zeal for improving the conditions of life for a wide

variety of Canadians permeated work at the NFB for years after Grierson was gone and Nash knew the tradition well. She had worked in distribution and on the Board's equal employment opportunity report before attending McGill to complete her education. Her PhD dissertation examined the images of women in the NFB war films, and in so doing looked at Grierson's beliefs about film as a catalyst for change. Thus, when later she heard Caldicott speak and was moved by the message, the response, I have to make a film about this so it will reach a wider audience, was fitting. Indeed, with Nash's NFB experience and a desire to use her knowledge of film to make films rather than teach or become a critic, a different response seems inconceivable.

If You Love This Planet aimed to widen the audience for Caldicott's message. It did so, and more. The film heightens dramatically Caldicott's words. Nash skillfully interweaves starkly ugly images of nuclear destruction (20 shots of atomic explosions, even more of dazed and grotesquely maimed survivors) with images of the stern, occasionally sarcastic Caldicott, all while the viewer hears the insistent voice detailing the dangers of nuclear armaments. At the outset, the viewer is jarred by the contrast seeing the flash and rising mushroom cloud from a nuclear blast immediately followed by the of sights & sounds of the war propaganda machine. The viewer sees a newsreel in which a dramatically excited narrator talks over martial music that today seems more suited to a parade than the shots of war just shown. The narrator enthuses about the "new atomic wonder, but the eyes of 1980 viewers cannot celebrate with the 1945 narrator as they see newspapers with boold headlines celebrating the death of the enemy, Japan. And, in 1982, to next show an eager young

fighter pilot placed by Ronald Reagan in an U.S. war information film provides a fitting irony.

But the literary term, irony, insufficiently captures the strength of the effect of **If You Love This Planet.** I have elsewhere used the term, dissonance, to describe Studio D (Bate and Taylor, in press). That term applies as well to the response a viewer has to **If You Love This Planet.** Viewers must cope with a dissonant reaction to the authority of those who assure that nuclear deterence is necessary. The combined images and words of this film require one to consider MAD as an appropriate appelation for the concept of mutual assured destruction. The response is especially powerful for viewers who now interpret WW II propaganda having seen much government "information" discredited, and living among widespread distrust of government. While to point out the different perspectives for interpretation now seems cliched, one must note how much these contrasts affect how viewers see **If You Love This Planet.** More than 40 years after the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, most viewers perceive nuclear weapons and their use virtually unaffected by the direct experience of WW II but strongly conditioned by exposure of government "disinformation" efforts. Such condition accounts for much of the effectiveness in the juxtaposed images in the film.

True to a pattern in Studio D, a twenty page "Resource Guide" was produced for use by those who show **If You Love This Planet.** (NFB, 1982). The booklet, its cover based on the poster designed for publicity (two children in black silhouette standing in an open door facing starkly white contrast and the outline of a mushroom cloud). The "Guide," priced at $1.00 and available at any NFB office while it was in print, notes how intensely

and variously viewers will respond to the film, and states that using the "Guide" will help those who show the film "to channel reactions . . . into positive action." The booklet summarizes the message of the film; records some of its starkest facts; refers readers to addtional topics for research, additional film and video resources and various print resources including teaching aids; identifies distributors for the resources; gives suggestions for action; and includes two pages of "contacts" for people interested in taking action. Highlighted is a list of questions that can be used for "after-screening" discussions. All this is presented because "only a well-informed population is capable of effecting political action on so complex an issue as the nuclear arms race." Pointing out that the film is only a starting point, the guide states its intent to "broaden the scope of the investigation and to encourage concerned citizens to work for peace."

Shortly after completing **If You Love This Planet**, Nash joined with veteran Studio D filmmaker, Bonnie Klein, to begin the Speaking our Peace Series that ultimately would include four films and a study guide to be used by people throughout Canada as they joined in the peace movement. Again, a proposal was developed that would result in three low budget films. The foundation for the series, which began with a working title, "Women, Power and Peace," is the 55 minute **Speaking Our Peace**, co-directed by Nash and Klein and produced by Klein and Margaret Pettigrew that was released in 1986. This film follows Muriel Duckworth, a Canadian peace activist, through a series of conversations with women in Canada and the Soviet Union. Duckworth's belief, clearly shared by the filmmakers, is that "ordinary" people," not the politicians or so-called leaders will stop the arms race.

Speaking Our Peace opens with dramatic footage of the women encamped at

Greenham Common in England, providing a surprising (for most viewers) revelation that the protests did not end when media coverage stopped. Hearing women in the camp describe their intense commitment and what it has cost them to carry out the protest and seeing the contempt with which military and media have treated them creates an immediate emotional involvement for the viewer. The film then proceeds to introduce the breadth of women's involvement in the peace efforts at the same time as it chronicles the destructiveness of the nuclear arms business. While not discounting the danger of nuclear war, the film extends the reasons supporting need for disarmament well beyond the danger of war.

Speaking Our Peace film introduces Ursula Franklin, a physicist and University Professor at University of Toronto, arguing that political and economic ideologies NEED a warlike atmosphere. She suggests that the concept of "the enemy" is essential and that political leadership will create an enemy if necessary to justify the continuation of the system. The viewer looks in on a conversation with Margaret Laurence in which she argues passionately that survival of our children and grandchildren is at stake. Darlene Keju, a public health researcher, chills an audience to whom she describes the increases in cancer and birth defects, telling of "jelly fish babies," born with no eyes or limbs, but moving as a jelly fish as they "breathe." Filmmaker Klein talks with a fisherman near an unranium refining facility who insists he never eats the fish he catches. Through a fence she asks a plant employee about the reported radioactive "spill" that occurred the previous night. He claims no knowledge of the spill, but it is confirmed by another worker nearby. When Klein expresses surprise at the many people fishing anyway, whom we see lined up against a railing with the

plant in the background (the question and the shot implying that plant authorities should post warnings), the employee too claims to be surprised. He states that usually only "sportsmen" fish there, and suggests that people don't eat the fish they catch, at least "not the big ones." He agrees that the fish are all contaminated, indicating that eating small ones would probably be o.k. since they hadn't lived in the water too long.

Viewers also meet Marion Dewar, mayor of Ottawa, who spurred the anti-nuclear resolution approved in that city. Women, she believes, have unique contributions to make in the peace effort. The camera records Solanges Vincent, a Montreal writer, activist, researcher and workshop leader with Action Travail des Femmes du Quebec, in a conversation as she outlines ways in which women can combat militarism and work for peace and social justice. This follows directly scenes of Nicaraguan poverty amidst war while the narrator points out that since the film began the military around the world has spent $45,000,000 and thousands of children have starved to death. The film records an interview with Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Roman Catholic nun and bio-statistician who is director of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health in which she argues that the victims of WW III are already among us. The camera also follows Bertell as she talks with families who discovered the homes they recently purchased had been built on a radioactive landfill. We are, Bertell charges, our own worst enemy, engaged in a "death process, and if we don't begin now to deal with it as a death process, it's going to be so far advanced that we'll be unable to stop it."

Some of the most moving footage in the film results from a visit to the Soviet Union by Duckworth and a staffer at a Vancouver branch of Project Ploughshares, Kathleen Wallace-Deering. They talk frankly with represent-

atives of the U.S.S.R. Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies. Wallace-Deering tells the Soviet representative that "both sides are building up armaments on the grounds that we need them for defense, and yet we've seen throughout history whenever there are military build-ups it ends in war." They visit a market, interacting with friendly women and children. They share folksongs in the home of a Russian woman. The camera captures Soviet soldiers and their women companions taking "tourist-type" photos of themselves at the memorial to the WWI defenders of Leningrad, the place where Hitler's advance into Russia was finally stopped by the bravery and suffering of hundreds of thousands of "ordinary" people. They talk with a woman who flew supplies into the city during that long winter of seige. As the viewer listens to their conversation, archival photos of that awful (with the word used in both its original sense of awe-inspiring and its current sense of terrible) scene are intercut scenes of the present. All these images reinforce the concept that Russia, the land of the "enemy" is comprised of "ordinary" people, people with whom women, at least, can interact with as individuals and with whom they share a common humanity that can contribute to stopping the arms race.

Speaking Our Peace is at once less effective as a film and more hopeful as a tool than **If You Love This Planet.** Partly because of its powerful impact, for many viewers the overall effect of **If You Love This Planet** is despair. Though **Speaking Our Peace** is less emotional and less dramatic, it leaves a viewer with a sense that women can and are making a difference.

The filmmakers did not "plan" for one film to capture attention and the other to teach people what to do to "save the planet" as Caldicott urged, but the films together work in just that manner.

The Speaking Our Peace series, however, was conceived as a package. The proposal to create it noted that since the planned location shots were expensive, the filmmakers intended to take much more footage than could ever be used in the foundation documentary. They planned to make "spin-off" films using the "extra" footage. This resulted in Studio D's Speaking Our Peace series, four films accompanied by a study guide suggesting how each or all of the films can be used by local groups as they discuss how to become involved in efforts to bring about peace. The working title of Speaking Our Peace, now slightly altered, appears in the Series Study Guide as "Speaking Our Peace, a Series About Women, Peace and Power." Nash directed the three spin-off films; Klein was producer; Kathleen Shannon the Executive Producer.

The first, **A Writer in the Nuclear Age: A Conversation with Margaret Laurence**, is quite short. Filmed in her own kitchen not long before her death, Laurence talks about the reasons for her involvement in efforts to bring about peace. She notes that she has been accused of being overly emotional about the issue of peace. Indignantly she responds that language "is my life, my profession, my vocation," and that "language itself is being demeaned" by the nuclear arms race. She virtually spits out her venom at reading "words such as megadeath and overkill." Echoing Caldicott in **If You Love This Planet**, she demands, "How can there be overkill? We can only die once. Megadeath is an obscene word, when you think that it refers glibly to the death of countless millions upon millions upon millions of living human beings. . ." She points out that this issue of peace is about the future of her children and grandchildren and asks, if she can't be emotional about this, "in God's name what can I get emotional about?"

The camera strays from Laurence few times during the 10 minute film and few other visual images are intercut. The film is almost a "talking head" piece. In this case, however, the technique succeeds. The film is brief; its strength is in the woman herself. For those acquainted with Laurence's work, little embellishment is needed. And even for viewers who do not know her work, Laurence the person will have a powerful impact. She is not a small or fragile person. She looks physically strong and exudes a moral strength. Though some women's voices may be used to support the stereotype
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that female voices (and female talk) are weak, Laurence belies that stereotype. Her words are strong; her voice deep and resonant; her eyes unblinking and they look at you directly. She is not pretentious, nor does she look "intellectual." Those "ordinary" people the filmmakers intend to reach and involve in the peace movement will respond to this very "ordinary" looking woman in a very "ordinary" setting who speaks with extraordinary power. Even those who might rationally support arms production for deterence will resist the emotional appeal of Laurence's argument with difficulty. It is hard to respond that the issue is something other than survival; to be emotional about surviving seems appropriate. At the least, she places the ball in the court of those who suggest emotionalism irrelevant. After looking at this film, it will be their burden to prove that it is.

As the "Speaking Our Peace Series Study Guide" (NFB, 1987) points out, this short filmed conversation with Margaret Laurence would be an excellent discussion starter in a group with less than an hour. Thus, its use in classes and club meeting is ideal. I believe its impact, especially in schools and women's groups, even stronger now that viewers know of

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Laurence's death. For such audiences, Laurence has high credibility from her literature; the strength of her concern for the peace issue is captured and communicated by this film. Viewers touched by Laurence's life in any fashion will be moved by the film's appeal to help carry forward work of such importance to her.

In the 20 minute film, **Nuclear Addiction: Dr. Rosalie Bertell on the Cost of Deterrence**, Nash returns to the technique of **If You Love This Planet**. During the making of **Speaking Our Peace**, Bertell was filmed lecturing to a university audience. Nuclear Addition presents the heart of that speech intercut with shots illustrating the thesis that WW III is already claiming its casualties and if not halted now, everyone will become its victims.

Bertell, epidemiologist and Roman Catholic Nun, President of Board of Directors at the International Institute of Concern for Public Health, spoke at Mt. St. Vincent University in Hallifax, Nova Scotia. In sharp contrast to Margaret Laurence, Bertell's voice is neither powerful nor resonant. The vocal quality is thin, the tone almost monotonous. Her speaking style is reserved. She rarely gestures, seldom moves. Yet she speaks with an intensity that can hold the attention of a live audience on this vital a topic. Uninterrupted presentation of that speech on film, however, would quickly lose viewers.

Not so **Nuclear Addiction**, however. It conveys (and probably strengthens) the chilling impact of Bertell's argument. Mixing images captured in still photographs, news film and video with shots of the intense, unmoving Bertell, the film is almost hypnotic. As Bertell discusses the horror that "on this small planet of ours, this small and

limited environment, we have already set off more than 1200 nuclear bombs," the film shows images of US, British and French nuclear explosions. While Bertell discusses the French tests in the South Pacific, noting that the French insisted that their tests would pose "no danger of radiation," while the radiation actually circled the globe 2 1/2 times, the film viewer is jarred by the contrast of Bertell's nearly monotone voice with the blinding flash and mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion.

Bertell takes on the argument that underground testing has made testing safe, responding that the 600-800 underground and underwater tests have emitted radioactive gases. She argues that we don't really know the effects of such tests and challenges the credibility of those who say the harm is minimal. This challenge is posed through showing how the "experts" have been wrong in the inaccuracy of the French claims about test effects, and in their own figures about what deterrence will cost.

She explains how underwater tests affect coral and organisms that fish feed upon in the oceans and notes that 1,000 cases of fish poisoning occur annually in the South Pacific. As Bertell talks, the film shows images of brightly colored coral and tropical fish, once again subjecting the viewer to dissonance: seeing great beauty and knowing of hidden, unseeable danger within those seemingly peaceful scenes. Bertell also notes that nuclear powered submarines release radioactive wastes as they cruise the seas, usually in prime fishing waters. While no figures are cited (in the film at least), the viewer, distracted by the changing visual imagery, may not miss them and instead may come away with the clear impression that such ships are contributing to nuclear poisoning through polluting ocean water.

Continuing her attack on the credibility of political and military

leaders, Bertell points out that in 1950 "they" (the experts) said 100 bombs were necessary for deterence. But in 1960 "they" estimated 2,600 were needed, while in '74 the estimate became 25,000, and in '83 it grew to 40,000, the numbers needed to deter rising even as the power of each bomb increased more than 1000 times. As she relates these figures, the viewer sees the destruction in Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the bombing, the disfiguration of people burned and otherwise maimed. The camera returns to Bertell as she says, "And there's still no end." She proposes that "we are a sick generation; we are an addicted generation. We are so paranoid about our security that we would destroy our life support system to be secure, usually a sign of belonging in a mental institution."

She mentions that warm water (heated by the tests) from French Polynesia in the Pacific current that hits the coasts of South and North America causes weather abnormalities, and goes on to say she only has begun to touch the effects on the planet. She hasn't, she says, mentioned eleven hundred uranium miners dead or dying in the US due to excess lung cancer nor the 100 such cases documented by the union in Canada (which the viewer hears about while seeing images of seemingly healthy miners and mills. She refers to radiation damage from uranium enrichment plants and mentions a case of people dying at a plant in Paducah KY. She cites the problem of radioactive waste, 100 million tons of it in Colorado, and 1 million tons in Ontario. As we hear these words, the film juxtaposes pictures of pristine mountains and mountain lakes with shots of waste water at the uranium refining facility--a bilious orange at times, later ugly brick hued red. This waste, she says, is washing down, bathing the N. Am. continent with radon gas. Throughout this sequence, Bertell's monotone but intense voice is saying

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graphically ugly images that the film presents visually.

"What," she asks, "is the cost of deterence?" Not to coming generations, but, now, in the Pre-War period? More than 16 million dead or serious casualities, she answers, declaring "this is the cost of deterence."

At the end of the film (and presumably the speech) Bertell develops her theme of addiction, noting the society in North America has every sign of addiction, much like a family in which "the breadwinner takes everything down the drain for alcohol or drugs." She points out that we all know these cases: Children have no shoes, family no medical care, can't afford education. All the money pays for the habit, the addiction. We're doing that, she argues, "with our weapons. We're sending good money after bad to build bigger, worse, more devasting, more self-destructive weapons. . . . We've already gone a long way down the road." Clearly, Bertell believes, it is past time to break the addiction.

At this point in the film is a sequence that puzzles the viewer until the overall theme of the Speaking Our Peace series becomes apparent. Bertell asks, "For God's sake, why don't we say we're sorry?" and follows with a litany: We've never said we were sorry for Hiroshima; We've never said we were sorry for Nagasaki; we've never said we were sorry for Bikini; we've never said we were sorry for Vietnam. She concludes (as the camera cuts to shots of the Greenham military base, its barbed wire and dogs--and shortly of the women at the fence). "It's got to be the people," who apologize. She says the military will never say they're sorry because they've been hired "by us" to defend us with the horrible weapons. She notes that the researchers will not say they're sorry because they are being paid to produce the most horrible weapons imaginable (accompanied by a cut

to a shot of a what this viewer took to be a plant with an an inferno type fire within it. She says the government will not say it's sorry (and we see the United Nations General Assembly) because they are our spokespersons and they think they have to be tough. The film includes this somewhat ackward sequence, less powerful than the rest to make the point that it's up to the "ordinary" people.

Bertell underlines the urgency. We have, she says, generated a situation in which there is no future, whether we have a disaster, a war or just keep on poisoning our own bed. We are, she argues, generating a death process in our species that will not stop unless we (read ordinary people) make up our minds that there will be no more war. At the end, the film weakens. It appears the speech had a relatively unsatisfying conclusion and the film did not change that. Still Bertell stated her thesis clearly and the film largely strengthened its impact.

The 27 minute **A Love Affair With Politics: A Portrait of Marion Dewar**, completes the three spinoff films in the Speaking Our Peace series. At first look, this film appears not to belong with the others. Its tone differs strikingly. Though, like Margaret Laurence, Dewar is interviewed at home, the setting contrasts greatly. She's in a warmly furnished living room with a softer ambience than the Laurence kitchen. Dewar dresses more stylishly than any of the other women shown in the series--as one would expect of a successful politician. She talks more about local government and local issues than about involvement in a global peace movement. Dewar speaks with less intensity than did either Laurence or Bertell and her subject is far less dramatic than Bertell's. The filmmakers responded to the differences by including more added visual material to accompany Dewar's

words. Using extensive cuts from television news coverage of Dewar as campaigner and as mayor, the film shows her transformation from housewife and public health nurse to polished politican. Dewar makes clear that she never planned to become a politician. The film shows and Dewar mentions how closely her life parallels that of other "ordinary" women. While as a student she considered becoming a scientist, she instead did "what was expected": becoming a nurse, getting married, having and raising four children. She found, however, upon re-entering the paid workforce, that being a public health nurse directly involved and was affected by local politics. At the urging of a retiring councilman, she reluctantly agreed to seek a local office and to her surprise was elected. After six years as a city councillor, she became mayor of Ottawa.

This experience led her to articulate what has virtually become her personal motto, and that motto provides Dewar's link to the peace films. "Think globally, act locally," she proclaimed in **Speaking Our Peace. A Love Affair with Politics** demonstrates how Dewar applied that motto. Dewar tells of and the interwoven news footage illustrates the application of this principle in community redevelopment, provision of social services, absorption of Vietnamese refugees into Canada. Though her championing of the referendum for disarmament may be the most well known of Dewar's "peace" acts, her action in changing the Canadian quota for the Vietnamese refugees may be the most concrete steo in that action. Canada set its quota at 8,000, a figure Dewar considered absurdly low. She announced that Ottawa would accept 4,000 and gained community support to do so. Then she challenged other municipalities to follow suit. When the effort was complete, Canada raised the quote to 50,000.

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In one way, it was fitting to complete **A Love Affair With Politics** at the end of the Speaking Our Peace series. It provides a satisfying answer to the question many viewers of **If You Love This Planet**, What can I do? This Studio D series develops the theme that despair is not an appropriate response, action is, that "ordinary" people can make a difference. Marion Dewar demonstrates one of the most promising paths, especially for women, for that effort: Think globally, act locally and you, too, can make a difference seems.

For more information about the Speaking Our Peace series or **If You Love This Planet**, contact Studio D The National Film Board of Canada, P. O. Box 6100, Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5.

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